

BRIERLEY-HILL
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

❖ ANNUAL REPORT ❖

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1896.

BRIERLEY-HILL :

PRINTED BY FORD & ADDISON. "ADVERTISER" OFFICE,

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B R I E R L E Y - H I L L

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

CHAIRMAN ... COUNCILLOR J. FISHER.
VICE-CHAIRMAN ,, MARK ROLLINSON.

C O U N C I L .

Councillor JOHN BENTON	Councillor W. H. SIMPKISS
„ ISAIAH BARKER	„ R. B. GUEST
„ T.G.DRINKWATER	„ J. SKIDMORE
„ W. H. HILL	„ G. J. COOPER
„ D. W. COOPER	„ T. CLULEE
„ J. GORDON	„ A. R. WARBY
„ J. J. APPLEBEY	„ L. A. TAYLOR
„ E. W. PEARSON	„ H. WEBB

Sanitary Committee.

The whole of the Members of the Council.

CHAIRMAN ... COUNCILLOR MARK ROLLINSON.

Medical Officer of Health.

H. D'ARCY ELLIS, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.

Clerk.

WILLIAM WALDRON, Solicitor.

Surveyor.

J. W. BECKLEY.

Analyst.

E. W. T. JONES, F.I.C.

Sanitary Inspector.

J O H N A L L D E N .

ANNUAL REPORT,

FOR THE YEAR 1896.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Brierley-Hill Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

During the past year the number of deaths registered was 178, of which 106 were males and 72 females.

The population is estimated at 11,972.

The death-rate for the year 1896 is therefore 14·86 per thousand of the population.

The death-rate for the preceding year, 1895, is 18·7 per thousand of the population.

The number of births during the year is 397, of which 213 were males and 184 females.

The birth-rate is 33·16 per thousand of the population; that of the year 1895 being 37·2 per thousand of the population.

The ages at which the deaths occurred during the year are as follows:—

Under 1 year of age	...	60	15 years and under 25	...	4
1 year and under 5 years	...	37	25 years and under 65	...	40
5 years and under 15	...	7	65 years and upwards	...	30

Eight inquests were held during the year. The verdicts found were—Natural causes, 5 ; Accident, 3.

Comparative Tables of the Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Zymotic Death-rate, with corresponding Death-rates taken from the Report of the County Medical Officer for the year 1895 :—

	Birth-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Death-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Zymotic Death-rate per 1,000 of Population.	Date.
Brierley-Hill ...	33·16	14·86	2·0	1896.
Brierley-Hill ...	37·2	18·7	2·13	1895.
County of Stafford Urban ...	36·2	19·1	2·39	1895.
England and Wales	30·3	18·7	2·14	1895.
Large Towns in England ...	31·2	20·5	2·82	1895.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

SCARLATINA.

Notified cases, 53 ; Deaths, 0.

This epidemic continues of the same remarkably mild character, as has been prevalent during the past four years. In 1893, 32 cases ; 1894, 74 cases ; 1895, 82 cases ; and 1896, 54 cases—a total of 242 notified cases and only 7 deaths. Not a single month escaped notification from Scarlatina during 1896.

All the usual means have been adopted to keep the disease from spreading, such as home isolation, disinfection, fumigation, and purification of the clothing and bedding in the Steam Disinfector. In most of the homes it is impossible to ensure complete isolation, and for this reason I think the disease breaks out again and again.

The mild character of the disease also makes it liable to be overlooked. I have traced seven cases that were not notified in time to

isolate, but in all of them the parents were ignorant of the nature of the illness, and could not be charged with wilful negligence.

The only certain way of stamping it out would be to send every case, not capable of isolation at home, to the Isolation Hospital, and keep them there until all risk of infection is past.

ENTERIC FEVER.

Notified cases, 18; Deaths, 1.

The case that died occurred in a house at 86, Delph. The house was supplied with S.S. water. Nuisances from closets and drainage were discovered and reported upon as being the probable cause of the outbreak at the house.

The most serious outbreak occurred in April at Alma Terrace, Bank-street, seven cases being notified in one week at this row of buildings. They were all removed to the Isolation Hospital and recovered. Two of these cases would most certainly have died if they had not been promptly removed to the hospital. Alma Terrace is a row of back to back houses, consisting of one living room and one bed room for each tenement, much too small for occupation. I condemned these houses, and advised their conversion into single tenements with through ventilation. This suggestion has not, up to the present, been adopted, owing to the disturbance from mining operations, but it should not be lost sight of. The property is supplied with S.S. water. The drainage and closets were very unsatisfactory. The houses were ordered to be closed and the nuisances complained of abated before they were re-occupied.

The other cases notified were scattered about the district. One case occurred at Lower Potter-street, at a house supplied by water from a well. A case had occurred on the same property in 1893. At that time I made an analysis of the water, and reported it as polluted with sewage and unfit for use. Notice was then given to put on the company's water, but it was disregarded, the result being another case in August, 1896, which fortunately recovered. It was a serious oversight to permit the use of this water to continue after the warning I had given. The S.S. water has now been laid on to these premises. The old well should be closed to prevent its further use.

In the other cases where the company's water was in use, it is abundantly proved that there are other important factors to be considered,

such as damp dwellings, over-crowding, saturation and pollution of the soil and atmosphere from badly-constructed closets and defective drainage, and where such insanitary conditions exist there will always be increased liability to this type of fever and disease.

MEMBRANOUS CROUP.

Known cases, 4 ; Deaths, 4.

In all of these cases insanitary conditions were found, such as dampness, defective ventilation and drainage. If these conditions did not actually cause the disease, they reduced the chances of recovery.

PUERPERAL FEVER.

Known cases, 2 ; Deaths, 1.

There was no connection between these two cases. The usual precautions as to cleansing and disinfection were taken, and the disease did not spread from either case.

DIPHTHERIA.

One fatal case at Turk-street in May. Two insanitary conditions were found on the premises, either of which was sufficient to produce the disease—a foul closet into which a pigstye drained—the Delph Brook (covered in), which passed within a few feet of the back door, had been penetrated by rats, allowing the foul air to escape. Both of these conditions have since been abated.

SEWERAGE.

A good deal of attention has been given to this question during the year. Mr. Willcox, the Sanitary Engineer engaged by your Council, has been over on several occasions, attending meetings and making further investigations.

In October, a deputation visited several towns in Lancashire, and inquired into the method of sewage disposal at Failsworth, Riddish, and Cheadle. They were accompanied by Mr. Willcox, and a report was drawn up which was afterwards submitted to your Council and discussed. As these inquiries and investigations proceed, it becomes more and more evident that there are difficulties in the way of successfully disposing of the sewage in the district which are not to be found in the

places which we have visited, and chief amongst these is the question of obtaining suitable land.

I confess to a feeling of considerable anxiety as to the wisdom of putting down an expensive plant in such a district as this, hemmed in as we are on every side by thickly-populated places, where the land in our own district is unsuitable, and the collected sewage must be treated by expensive chemical means, none of which can be said to be entirely satisfactory.

An important step has recently been taken in considering the advisability of joining with the Rural Sanitary District of Kingswinford in a combined scheme, and a conference, attended by Mr. Willcox, has already been held between representatives of the two authorities.

I have no doubt this is the proper solution of the difficulty, and would be to the advantage of both sanitary areas. It would be a huge mistake for the two districts, having such natural facilities for a common outfall, to ignore this advantage, and have separate systems. There is abundance of suitable land outside the Rural Sanitary District where the difficulty of dealing with the effluent could be met in the best possible way.

The question of a combined sanitary area which has now been raised, will necessarily involve considerable delay, but if you can arrive at a satisfactory arrangement, and carry your combined outfall works outside both districts, the delay will be amply justified.

EXCREMENT REMOVAL.

In my last Annual Report I asked you to consider the desirability of taking this important work into your own hands, as I had good reason to be dissatisfied with the Contractor's work during the year.

You did not adopt my suggestion, but you appointed your Contractor for a period of three years instead of annually, as had been the custom hitherto.

So far, this plan appears to have obtained better results. The Contractor has not been able to keep the number of complaints down to the

level that I think is necessary, and as he had in fact undertaken to do, but a far less number of complaints of inattention have reached me, and I have found him very prompt in attending to any cases I brought to his notice. This is a great improvement over my experience of the previous year.

The improvement may be due to the new system of contract, but I think it is mainly due to the greater attention which the Sanitary Committee has given to this department, and I hope they will continue to exercise the same diligence in supervising and inquiring into the manner in which the Contractor is doing his work.

In my last Annual Report I also drew your attention to the insanitary condition of many of the closets and ashpits.

Here again I am glad to be able to say that the Sanitary Committee has endeavoured to make some improvement. During the year 166 notices have been served upon owners to remedy the defects I mentioned, and a large amount of good and useful work has been the result. Your Inspector reports that the whole 166 notices have been attended to, and the nuisances abated.

The Contractor still, however, complains of having to empty some very wet ashpits, which are a great hindrance to his work. Wherever such conditions do exist, the owners should be compelled to remove them, not only to assist the Contractor—whose complaints should always be considered important, because he has better opportunities of knowing where these defects lie—but also for the sake of the occupiers and their neighbours, to whom such places are a serious danger at the time the cleansing is going on.

GENERAL DEATH-RATE.

The Death-rate for the year 1896 (14·86), is the lowest Death-rate for your district which has occurred during the past twenty years. The next lowest Death-rate occurred in the year 1881, and was then 15·5 per thousand of the population.

Infant Mortality.—As a normal condition the tendency to death is high in infancy, and then it diminishes in amount towards a minimum which is in the 10—15 years age group, and then onwards it steadily

increases throughout life. Reference to Table II. appended to this Report shows there is a considerable reduction in the infant Death-rate over the previous ten years.

The following Table is an Analysis of the Causes of Deaths in Infants under One Year of age :—

Insufficient Vitality and Protracted Birth.	Premature Birth.	Diarrhoea.	Convulsions.	Wasting Diseases.	Dentition.	Accident.	Gastritis.	Tubercular Meningitis.	Congenital Syphilis.	Pneumonia.	Bronchitis.	Croup.	Total.
19	7	11	4	3	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	60

One only of the whole 60 deaths was due to a disease which is included amongst those that are compulsorily notified, under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, viz., Croup.

Ten, out of the 60 deaths, occurred within one day of birth, and 14 within one month of birth, making 24 deaths out of 60, within one month of birth.

Fifty-six of the children were born in wedlock and four were illegitimate; of the latter one of the mothers was a domestic servant, the other three mothers worked in brickyards.

Diarrhoea.—In the Urban Districts of the county the death-rate from Diarrhoea, for the year 1895, per thousand of the population, was 1·02; that of Brierley-Hill for the same year being 1·00. For the year 1896 the Diarrhoea death-rate is 1·08 for Brierley-Hill. Eight of these deaths occurred in children under six months old, and were mainly due to improper feeding. Nine out of the total of thirteen deaths occurred in July and August, during the hottest weather of the year.

Phthisis.—The average death-rate from Phthisis for the past five years is 0·13; that for 1896, 1·00. Of the twelve deaths, two were iron-workers, one a tinworker, one a compositor, two carters, one labourer, one publican, one brewer's drayman, one a boy ten years old, and two young women, domestic servants.

Analysis of the Causes of Death in Children between One and Five Years of Age :—

Measles.	Diarrhœa.	Croup.	Diphtheria.	Scarlatina.	Whooping Cough.	Pneumonia.	Bronchitis.	Meningitis.	Convulsions.	Dentition.	Gastritis.	Cancer.	Not Certified.
8	2	3	1	1	1	2	6	5	2	3	1	1	1

In this group we find sixteen causes of death which belong to the preventable class of diseases, and which may be due to insanitary conditions.

The next age group, which has the most importance in our deate-rate, is that between 25 and 65, and 65 years and upwards. The average death-rate between 25 and 65 years for the past five years is 4·15, and the average rate for 65 years and upwards for the past five years, 4·09. The former for 1896, is 3·34; and the latter, 2·50.

It is therefore in the two extremes of life, under one year of age and over 65 years of age, that the greatest reduction in the death-rate occurs in 1896.

I have gone through the statistics of the past ten years as to the causes of death between 25 and 65 years of age, and after eliminating zymotic, constitutional and accidental causes, I find that the excessive use of alcohol is a most important factor in the death-rate for this period.

SANITARY NOTES.

The Isolation Hospital is in good order. It has proved very useful to our own and the Quarry Bank district during the year, in the isolation of Enteric Fever cases. Quarry Bank sent in eighteen cases, of which two died. Brierley-Hill, six cases and no death. It has been occupied for a period of 27 weeks, out of which Brierley-Hill cases occupied eight weeks.

Trained Nurses were readily obtained from the Wolverhampton Nursing Institute, at a moderate cost, and gave every satisfaction.

The Steam Disinfector continues in good working order, and has been used by your district on 37 occasions, excepting the cases treated in the Hospital.

Water Supply.—Ninety-one houses have been supplied with the Company's water during the year.

One sample of well water was taken for analysis, condemned, and the Company's water substituted.

Houses Unfit for Habitation.—Twenty-one were condemned. In thirteen of these the defects complained of were improved. The other eight remain unoccupied in consequence of mining operations, and will receive attention in due course.

Factory and Workshops Act.—I have made nine special inspections. In three additional closets were advised and adopted ; in two defects in ventilation were remedied, and in five limewashing was ordered.

I have made 46 special inspections during the year, and reported insanitary conditions to your Sanitary Committee, all of which received notice to abate.

Open Ditches and Water Courses.—On several occasions during the year I have called your attention to the obstructed and foul condition of these places. A little more systematic and regular attention to their condition is very necessary and desirable.

My duty in bringing before you the sanitary defects in your district is not always an agreeable one, but I have to thank you for the uniform courtesy and attention which you have shown to me.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. D'ARCY ELLIS.

February 1st, 1897.

TABLE I.

	Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Fevers.					Cholera.	Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea.	Rheumatic Fever.	Bronchitis & Pleurisy.	Pneumonia.	Phthisis.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All others.	Total.
					Typhus.	Typhoid.	Puerperal.	Continued.	Relapsing.													
Under 5 Years of Age	..	1	1	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	..	13	..	8	5	0	..	2	51	93
5 Years and upwards	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	10	4	12	7	1	48	85

REGISTERED BIRTHS.			REGISTERED DEATHS.			MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES.					
Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Under 1 Year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 Years and upwards.
213	184	397	106	72	178	60	37	7	4	40	30

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—Monthly Notifications.

TABLE III.

	January.	February.	March	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total—1896	1895.	1894.	1893.
Small-pox ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17	39
Cholera ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria ..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	1
Membranous Croup ..	..	1	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	4	1	1	2
Erysipelas ..	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	1	1	8	11	11	17
Scarlatina ..	5	2	3	2	5	1	5	6	8	7	8	1	53	82	74	32
Typhus Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever	1	1	3	8	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	1	18	7	16	10
Puerperal ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	2	1	1	..
Total ..	8	4	7	10	7	1	9	11	8	8	9	4	86	102	122	101

Surveyor's Report.

Sewers.—Number of yards laid down	...	...	707.
Paving.—Number of square yards blue brick—			
At Delph	...	...	1306
„ Lower Delph	...	...	670
„ Level-street	...	...	573
		—	2569.
Water Supply.—Number of houses connected S.S. Water Co.			91.
Building.—Number of Plans passed	...	...	19.
Number of Dwellings erected	...	...	31.

The Ditches and Watercourses have been inspected every two weeks, and cleansed when necessary.

The Sewers have been periodically flushed, particularly during the summer months, and are now in good order.

There has been no complaint of deficiency in the Water supply during the year, the additional mains laid by the Company having secured an ample supply.

J. W. BECKLEY,

Surveyor.

February 10th, 1897.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK

Done in the Inspector of Nuisances Department during the year 1896, in the Urban Sanitary District of Brierley-Hill.

				Inspections and Observations made.	Formal Notices by Authority,	Nuisances Abated after Notice.		
Dwelling-houses and Schools.	}	Foul Conditions	...	340	166	166		
		Over-crowding	...	7	7	7		
		Dairies and Milkshops	...	15	Inspected quarterly & all found	clean and satisfact'y.		
		Cowsheds	...	15				
		Bakehouses	...	12				
		Slaughter-houses	...	12				
		Canal Boats	...	48				
		Ashpits and Privies	...	255				
		Deposits of Refuse & Manure		1			1	1
		Water Closets	...	10				
		House Drainage	}	Defective Traps	...	14	3	14
				No Disconnection	...	2	2	2
				Other Faults...	...	1	1	1
				Water Supply	...	7	7	7
Pigsties	...			1	1	1		
Animals improperly kept			...	1	1	1		
Totals				739	189	200		
					Nos.			
Seizures of Unwholesome Food				...	...	1
Samples of Water taken for Analysis				...	...	1
,, ,, condemned as unfit for use				...	...	1
Precautions against Infectious Disease.								
Lots of Infected Bedding Stoved or Destroyed				...	...	37
Houses Disinfected after Infectious Disease				...	...	30

Signed JNO. ALLDEN,

Inspector of Nuisances.

SALES OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.—List of Samples taken during 1896, with results.

No. of Sample.	Article.	Genuine.	Adulterated.	Extent of Adulteration (if any).	Results.
1	} Skim milk	3		Genuine	
2					
3					
4	} Tea	2		"	
5					
6	Sago	1		"	
7	Butter	1		"	
8	Tea	1		"	
9	Sago	1		"	
10	} Butter	4		"	
to					
13					
14	Tea	1		"	
15	Sago	1		"	
16	Butter		1	Margarine	Fined £7 and costs
17	} Butter	1		Genuine	
to					
20					
21	Seidlitz Powders	1		"	

22	Butter	1	Genuine		
23	Milk	1	"		
24	Butter	1	Margarine		Fined £ 2 and costs.
25	} Butter	2	Genuine		
26					
27	} Milk	7	20% added water		Fined £ 1 and costs.
34					
35	} Lemon Peel	2	Genuine		
36					
37	Whiskey	1	5% beyond statutory limit		Cautioned.
38	"	1	7% beyond statutory limit		Cautioned.
39	} Butter	2	Genuine		
40					
41	} Milk	6	Genuine		
46					
		41		5	

H. VAN TROMP,
H.M. Inspector.

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Ford and Addison, Steam Printers, “Advertiser” Office, Brierley-Hill.  
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